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A
Protestant's ADDRESS
TO THE
PROTESTANTS
OF
I R E L A N D.

Wherein some sure METHODS are laid
down, by which their Number may be en-
creased, and that of the *Papists* diminished.



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T H E

P R E F A C E.

WHOEVER considers the Nature of the Popish Religion, and the Multitudes of those who are of that Persuasion in this Kingdom, must see that we Protestants are not only obliged by all the strongest Ties of Christian Charity, but by the most necessary Regard to our own Safety, to endeavour by all equitable Methods to lessen the Number of them.

Notwithstanding the late Address of the Roman Catholics of *Ireland*, we have the utmost Reason to fear that they have not as yet entirely thrown off those detestible Principles of Persecution and Rebellion on Account of Religion, which we were wont to ascribe to their whole Church in general, but which the Author of this Address would confine to the Court of *Rome* alone. We are not in Politicks as we are in Religion, always to take Mens Actions in the most favourable Light they will bear; no, the Rule is to be inverted here, we are in this Case always to fear the worst, and to give no Credit to the fairest Pretences, till we have thoroughly examined them, and found upon Trial that they deserve our Belief. The Quietness of the Papists in this Country for upwards of sixty Years, during which Period two Rebellions were raised in our neighbouring Island, may have been owing to other Reasons than to a Change of Opinion in this Particular. It may possibly have proceeded from a want of Power, or a convenient Opportunity, or from a Conviction, that our Fate must follow that of *England*, or from some other prudential Motives. And when we indeed consider that the Lawfulness, nay and the Merit too, of rising against an heretical Government in Favour of their intended Catholicism, is fixed upon them by all the Means with which their Church can establish an

Article of Faith. That it has been defined by what they esteem a General Council, has frequently been put in Execution by them, and had for some Ages an universal Consent of their Doctors, and that every Bishop of theirs is obliged at his Consecration to take an Oath, that he will to his Power, protect and enlarge the Royalties of his Lord the Pope, and persecute and destroy all Hereticks; and that they of this Kingdom, altho' often called upon for this Purpose, have never yet taken any proper Steps to assure us, that they have renounced these Principles; it remains, that we attribute this late commendable Behaviour of theirs, to some such Causes as have been already mentioned, and not to any real Alteration of their Opinion upon this Head.

And how very dangerous it must be, to have such a Number of our People, Enemies to us and our Constitution is easy to see. They exceed us Protestants, I think nearly as two to one; and notwithstanding the very different Notion, which many of our Religion have entertained of this Matter, this is the most that can in reality be allowed to them. It is out of Question that the Inhabitants of *Ulster* do very much exceed one fourth of our People, nay amount very nearly to a third Part of the whole *. If then we shall suppose the Protestants of the three other Provinces, to surpass the Number of the Papists in the North, as I am convinced they do by such a large Majority, as will make up what the others want of one full third; this will bring the Difference between us to that Proportion at which I have already fixed it. And this upon the most exact Scrutiny, I am persuaded will appear to be the Truth. But even at this Way of Reckoning, their Majority is Matter of very serious Reflection to us.

Such superior Numbers with such Kind of Principles, must ever make them dangerous Inmates; and they are more especially so at this Time. We are now engaged in an hitherto unsuccessful War with *France*; which as it is on the one Hand the most subtil and powerful Nation in Europe, and most inveterate against us, so on the other, has it the greatest Influence upon them; there being no other which they so much admire, imitate, and would so blindly follow.

* Houses of *Ireland* in *Watson's Almanack*, 1757.

<i>Leinster</i>	122900	} <i>Conaught</i> contains not one 8th Part of our People, <i>Ulster</i> is within 16500 Houses of one third of the whole.
<i>Munster</i>	109700	
<i>Ulster</i>	115500	
<i>Connaught</i>	47200	

Besides

Besides this, we have no Reason to think, that the Papists have grown less in their Proportion for many Years past. Till the Charter Schools came in to our Assistance, I am of Opinion that they rather encreased upon us. Our great Indifference to, or Neglect of this Matter, and their constant and careful Attention to it, together with their more early Marriages, have given them such Advantages above us, as have more than ballanced those which we had on our Side; and this I speak from such a Knowledge in the Affair, as leaves me no Room to doubt of its being a Truth.

It must, therefore, be of the greatest Benefit to us Protestants, to have any Christian Method pointed out, by which we may lessen the Number of those People, or make them less dangerous to us. And as this is a Matter, in which, I hope my Thoughts may be of some Service to the Publick, I have sat down to give an Account of them. But were it not that the present very dangerous Situation of our Affairs affords me a Prospect of meeting with some Attention from my fellow Protestants, I had never undertaken the Work; so universally prevailing has been our Indifference to this Matter, for a long Time past, so stupidly Criminal is our Neglect of it.

If in any Thing I shall be judged to have spoken freely, it is what I intended to do; if in any Thing I shall give Offence, it is what I wish not, and would have avoided if I could. But there is no curing such a deep and rancorous Sore without probing it to the Bottom; and if in the doing of this, a Patient or two shall wince or cry out, I shall not think, I have acted cruelly by him: Or to speak without a Metaphor, as I shall say nothing but Truth, I shall not value the Disobliging, (if it shall so happen) a few unreasonable Persons, when their Behaviour is very injurious to the Nation, and the detecting of it, may prove a considerable Good to the whole.

A D D R E S S.

GENTLEMEN of the Clergy, I first Address my self to you, because you are more interested in this Matter than any others, and are the People upon whom it principally depends, to promote or to destroy my Scheme. Your Safety is in this more nearly concerned than that of the Laity: Your Religion and you must perish or prosper together; and your Obligations in Conscience are greater than theirs. You have taken upon you the Office of ministring to the Church of Christ, and are thereby bound to Teach and Watch over it for the Salvation of it's Members, as they that must give an Account of them to that good God, who being a Lover of all his Creatures, so must he be in the highest Degree, a Lover of Souls; and who will therefore severely require at your Hands, all those which shall be destroyed by any Fault or Neglect of your's.

The Cause which you are concerned in is such in every Respect, as to deserve and demand the utmost Warmth of your Affections. The Religion which you Profess is so rationally and truly Christian, and that which you are to oppose is so diametrically opposite to both these Characters, that as the one is worthy of all your Love, so does the other deserve a proportionable Degree of your Aversion. I know indeed, that this Zeal which I would recommend to you, has of late been mightily decried among us as a very wrong and pernicious Thing, which has had such an unhappy Effect, that many of our People who pretend to be most knowing, prefer a Coolness of Temper, or rather indeed, an Indifference about all religious Matters, to that Glow and Ardour which I would raise in your Breasts. It is not to be denied that much Mischiefe has been occasioned to the World by religious Zeal, when misguided; but it is to be denied, that it therefore either ought to be or can be extinguished. The Affections which God hath given us are most necessary Parts of our Nature, and are not to be destroyed, but to be duly regulated; to be kept to those proper Objects and Bounds, which Reason

son and Religion shall point out to us. What is good is to be loved, and what appears good to us we are made to love, and this with a Degree of Desire proportioned to the Good we expect from it. This is the great Cause of all our Actions, and to destroy this Cause, if it could be done, would be to make us a Set of most useless and insignificant Creatures, who would be utterly unfitted for the most material Business of this, and the other Life, and incapable of performing any Thing useful or great.

And thus it is that our Religion, in all Things emphatically true, disdains the cool Refinements of Philosophy, and is so far from blaming a Zeal according to Knowledge, that it has recommended it in many Instances, and condemned the Want of it as a high Depravity of our Nature*. And if this Ardour of Mind has, when misguided, produced a great deal of Evil to the World, so must it be confessed by all Christians, when properly regulated, to have brought forth an infinitely greater Good. It was an inconceivable Degree of this Warmth that begat Christianity, and it is owing to the same that we now enjoy and exult in it's glorious and enlivening Light. Since then the Cause in which we are engaged is such, that our Consciences, our temporal Felicity, the Honour of Christianity and the Good of Souls are so nearly concerned in it, we ought in this Case to entertain and exert a Zeal proportionable to the vast Importance of the Thing.

And the Reason why I have been recommending this extraordinary Fervour to you, is because it is as requisite as it is just; and you will never be able to do any considerable Good to the *Protestant Cause without always having* a large Share of it fervently glowing in your Breasts. The Work you are to undertake, Reverend Sirs, is very difficult; it requires a great deal of Reading and Knowledge to make you Masters of it; you have the Weakness of our corrupted Nature to fight against you, and you have an active and furious Zeal to contend with: A Zeal, which as it leaves no Means whatsoever unattempted still further to prejudice their own bigotted People, so neither to pervert the Protestants, and to inveigle them over to the Church of Rome.

* Rom. 10. 2. Gal. 4. 8. 2 Cor. 7. 11. Jude ver. 3. Rev. 3. 16.

The greatest Part of the little Learning which our *Romish* Priests possess, is the Knowledge of the Controversy between them and us, as it may be most successfully managed with the Vulgar; and without being well acquainted with this Matter also, you will not be able to do any Service to the Protestant Cause, but may have your Attempts to promote it turned *into an unhappy Obstruction* to it. To be properly prepared for preserving your own People, and much more for making any Converts among the others, you ought to have carefully studied the best Writers on our Side of the Question, and indeed, if you would make yourself in any Manner perfect in this Knowledge, to have considered also what has been said by the other Party. And this Latter is the more necessary at this Time; because you have now to do with a Set of Men, who find it more easy in many Particulars to palliate than to defend their Belief. Who, either out of Ignorance of their own Religion, or some other culpable Motive, will deny that in their Speech and Writings, which their Church certainly teaches, and the Bulk of their Communion do every Day practise. And when you have by these Means made yourselves thoroughly acquainted with the Natures of the two Religions, you will find your own to be, so true, so pure, in every respect, as to deserve the highest Degree of your Esteem and Love, and the other to be on the contrary, so impure and false, as to merit an equal Proportion of your Hatred or Dislike; and you will also find, that as you are therefore obliged in Conscience by all honest Means to oppose the latter, so likewise to propagate the former, and to do all in your Power to make it prevail, and be embraced by all Kinds of People.

But, then, that Purity of our Faith, which will so exceedingly recommend it to every sensible virtuous Christian, will be one great Obstacle to your making any Converts to it, and will sometimes endanger the losing of some of your own Flock. Were Men not Men, but Angels, this could not be the Case, but so long as the greater Part of them are indolent, or vicious, it cannot but happen, that this bad Religion, which is so craftily adapted to make them easy in these Matters, shall greatly have the Advantage of that careful and severe *Morality* which you must recommend in it's Stead. That they are of an infallible Church which cannot err; that they are not therefore to examine their Religion, or to judge for themselves, but to believe implicitly, as that teaches them, (for even
to

to doubt of the Truth of it, is a mortal Sin) that out of this Church there is no Salvation, but it is so easily and certainly to be obtained in it, that the Priest can, if they will at all join with him, by performing his Office, undoubtedly save their Souls. That there are some Sins so slight and venial, that they do not incur the Anger of God, nor put a Man in Danger of Damnation. That the most grievous of Sins can be in a Moment wiped away by the Priest's Absolution, when they have been confessed to him, with Sorrow for having committed them, so as to take away all the damnable Guilt of them. That the temporal Punishment which remains due for them, may be done away by performing the Penance which has been appointed for these Sins; or, if by the Neglect of this, the Soul should be sent to Purgatory, it may, by a good Number of Masses, bought for this Purpose, be very much eased, and in Time, totally delivered from the Fire of it; or, the Thing may be at once done by an Indulgence purchased from the Pope for a good Sum of Money; or, even by a Friend's visiting such or such a Church, or Shrine, and running over a Prayer or two for him upon the Saint's Festival. That to be present at Mass, although you join not in any of the Prayers, is to partake of a Sacrifice which is propitiatory for the Sins of the Dead and of the Living. That the doing of the Work is all; that you may hire others to Pray, or Fast for you, with equal Benefit as if the Thing was done by yourself. That a Man may do more than is necessary for his own Salvation, and thereby deserve Grace and Favour for others. That the Church is hereby endowed with a large Fund of Merit, which the Pope may distribute to those who have not done enough for themselves. That by joining yourself to such or such a Fraternity, you partake of all the Merits of that Brotherhood; That the having your Body buried in the Habit of such a religious Order, will so fright away the Devil, that he shall not dare to meddle with you. That you can by Vows of Continence, Poverty, and forsaking the World, by your Fastings, Alms, Mortifications, Pilgrimages, Prayers, and Conversion of Infidels or Hereticks, go immediately to Heaven after your Death, where you shall have great Power to do Good or Evil to the People of this World; that you shall by these Means deserve to be beatified and made a Saint by the Pope, to have your Image set up in Churches, and to be worshipped publickly and privately by Prayers, Praises, and rich Offerings, provided that these are not
given

given to you as being God, but as a Man. That your Priest is so great a Person as that he can make God by pronouncing three or four Words. That as he can by the forementioned Means, almost certainly save your Soul, so can he unavoidably damn it, if he pleases; for you have neither been baptized, nor absolved, nor have received any Sacrament, unless he has intended that you should.

These Things, and many more, which I might have inserted, will easily shew you, Gentlemen, that you will have a very hard Task upon your Hands, when you undertake to convert any of the Papists to our Belief, and many Times also to prevent some of your own People from being perverted to theirs; when instead of these you are to teach them, that they are to work out their own Salvation with Care and Fearfulness; that they are to read their Bible, examine their Religion, and judge for themselves to the best of their power; that nothing but internal Purity and Holiness can render any of their Services acceptable to their God; that there is no compensating for a wicked Life by any other Means whatsoever; that this Life is the only Season allowed to them to work in, that such as Death finds them, such will their State remain for ever, without any possible Alteration. That no other Man's Righteousness, or Works, can be of any Benefit to them; that nothing but a virtuous Life, or such a timely Repentance as makes a real Reformation in them, can procure them the Favour of God, or save them from his Wrath and everlasting Damnation; that the saving Merits of their Redeemer's Death is applicable to their Souls only, on the Conditions of Faith, and this thorough Reformation, and that all their Clergy can do for them, is to declare these Terms of Acceptance, and persuade them to this timely Conversion. Although all these Protestant Tenets are so palpably pure and true, and those others of the Church of *Rome* so manifestly absurd and false, that no Man would endure them who was acquainted with the Gospel, and had formed his religious Principles upon what he had found in it, yet, as the Generality of Mankind are so exceedingly prone to Negligence and Vice, and will be glad therefore, and ready to embrace any Scheme, which shall make their Happiness in the next Life, consistent with their indulging their idle and vicious Inclinations in this, as the Wickedness of these Principles makes a large amends for the Absurdity of them in dissolute Minds, and as these Opinions are likewise so well fitted to gain upon the Ignorance and Fearfulness

fulness of some, and the spiritual Pride of others, who are of a more severe and enthusiastick Temper; it cannot but happen, that this bad Religion which is so craftily accommodated to the Foibles of Mankind, will not only harden a great many of their People beyond all Power of Conviction, but will also frequently endanger the Loss of some of your's, who by a careless and profligate Life, have given such Arguments a great and fatal Hold upon them. And this Reasoning is so frequently verified by Facts, and has done so much Damage to the Protestant Cause, that he must be very little acquainted with these Matters, who has not known by Experience the fatal Effects of it.

But, beside this, you will have a furious and active Zeal to contend with: A Zeal, that never suffers either the Priest or his People to be at rest; but as it fills them with the deepest Prejudices in Favour of their own Religion, so does it constantly send them Abroad, to propagate their Principles among our People; and to urge their Arguments, which however false, and long since confuted, are very plausible, with such a Confidence as is very apt to stagger weak Protestants, and does indeed frequently deceive many of them. And what Good can be expected; nay, rather what Mischief may not be feared, when the Attack is made with such Perseverance and Eagerness by the one Party, and is opposed by the other with such an Indifference or total Neglect? It is indeed easy to see, that we shall never be able to preserve our own People, much less to convert any of theirs, till we have transplanted some of that Zeal which rages in their Breasts with such a pernicious Fury, that like a devouring Fire it destroys every Thing within it's Reach, into the more cool and moderate Regions of our own Hearts, where, under the Guidance of Reason, and pure Religion, it may be made only to warm and enliven, and to do good to the World. Consider, Gentlemen, that the superior Excellency of our Principles requires a superior Affection to them; that you have the Love of Mankind, the Fear of God, the Impossibility of your being saved as Men, without being justified as diligent and faithful Clergymen, the much better Provision that is made for your Subsistence, and the shameful Reflection that a bad Cause, in such poor and weak Hands, should prevail against so good a One in the Management of such knowing and respectable Persons: Consider, that you have all these Things to warm and invigorate your Zeal, and let therefore your Ardour in it be equal to the high Importance and Merit of the Thing. And

And when you have thus properly engaged your Affections in the Cause, you will not think much of any Trouble that may be necessary to preserve your own People, or to gain upon any of theirs. Instead of quitting your Cure, and running up to *Dublin* to spend your Time in Idleness, or to hunt after Preferment, by attending the Levies of the Great, you will reside upon your Living, if you can by any Means do it; you will, if you happen to be settled in a popish Country, and it is hardly possible, but you must have a good many Papists in your Flock, you will carefully read over the Controversy between them and us; you will digest as well as you can, the most material and striking Parts of it into concise Tracts; and will be frequent as Occasion shall require, in delivering them from the Pulpit, till you have hereby given your Hearers a competent Knowledge of the Points in Dispute: You will besides this go much Abroad among your People; you will diligently watch over them, and find out those that are in Danger of being deceived by the crafty Emissaries of *Rome*, and guard them against their Attempts by clear Arguments adapted to their several Wants and Abilities; and you will be careful to have their Children educated in a proper Knowledge of Christianity, such as their Bible and our pure Church sets forth. By these Means, you will make your People knowing in their Religion, and raise their Minds to the most ardent Love of it, for it is worthy of this Love; and from hence so reasonably and thoroughly attached to it, that they will be immoveable in it. And, by these Means also, may you sometimes make Reprisals upon the Church of *Rome*, and by your Knowledge and Industry win over some of their People to our Belief.

And here, I cannot but lament, that for want of this Learning in our Clergy, or Zeal for our Cause, many of our most ignorant Converts remain so ill instructed, that it is to be feared, their Hearts have never thoroughly been turned to us; and no Wonder, when there has never been the least Care taken to inform their Minds, or convince them of the apparent Truth of that Religion which they have embraced, but they are entirely left to themselves, to pick up any Kind of Knowledge of the *Arguments in it's Favour*, or to relapse into an Attention only to those against it, to their old Prejudices, and to the Arts of their former Priests.

I know, from whatever Cause it has proceeded, the preaching upon the Controversy between *Rome* and us, has long since been

been banished from our Pulpits; and I am sensible that a Clergyman cannot now enter upon these Points without being thought Singular, and running the Risque of giving Offence to the most genteel Part of his Congregation; but I cannot see the Reasonableness of this Proceeding, on the contrary, to me it appears ill founded, and productive of a great many evil Consequences; for is it that the treating of these Matters will require a masterly Hand to do it well, and that it were better to let them alone than to have them handled in an improper Manner? Why the Thing is acknowledged; but then we have such a Number of the most able Writers on our Side, who have wrote of all the Points in Dispute between the Church of *Rome* and us, in such a clear and masterly Manner, that it must be an easy Matter for a Man of tollerable Abilities and Application, (and this is what I shall suppose all our Clergy to be capable of) to make such a Collection from hence, as will be always exceedingly useful to their People, as I know that it is much wanted by them. Or is it that the better, I should have said, the most genteel Part of the Congregation, must be supposed so knowing, as to want no Instruction in these Matters. Why if this was the Case, they might however bear for half an Hour in a Quarter of a Year, to have these Things repeated over for the Benefit of the more unlearned Part of the Audience.

But with all due Deference to the great Knowledge of this Age, I do not think our present set of Gentry excel in Learning their Protestant Forefathers as to this particular; and yet these were contented, nay and pleased to, with frequently hearing Discourses of an Hour long upon this Subject, and were afterwards very careful in reading and considering the Arguments on both Sides; nay, I have known some People to go so far as to affirm, that the present Gentry themselves, might be much benefited by such Discourses, that they are not so well acquainted as they ought to be with the different Natures and Foundations of the two Religions, as their Progenitors were, and that this is the Reason why they never shew any greater Regard to the Reformation, than by a Number of Protestant Bumper Toasts, to get Drunk in the Cause; nay more, some People have gone yet much farther, and doubted if a Change of Interest should happen, whether some of these Gentry might not be Ignorant and Careless enough, to be perverted by the Arguments in Favour of the Church of *Rome*; or, at least, whether they might think it
worth

worth their while to Sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes, not over a Bottle or in an Address, but in good earnest in the Field or at a Stake, in Support of a Religion which they had been bred up with some little liking to, but did indeed neither Understand or Love; but without subscribing to such severe Censures, it will I suppose be allowed me, that the lower Kind of People must necessarily require much Instruction in these Matters; that without a Knowledge of their Protestant Faith, as well as a Zeal for it, they will never be a Match for the Cunning and Confidence of the Popish Priests, and that our Clergy can only by preaching directly against their Tenets, ever furnish them with a Measure of this Knowledge equal to their Wants, and put them out of the Power of being perverted to the Romish Superstition.

Or is it, that the continual Clamours of the Deists and Arians, have made you think it Unchristian and Immoral to preach upon controversial Points: Why, Gentlemen, it would be as foolish in you to be caught by this Bait, as it is dishonest in them to throw it out to you. For do they not all of them do this very Thing, which they would thus Discountenance in you? Are they not every Day publishing Books filled with the most crafty and virulent Invectives against your Religion? And is it not in those very Books that this Acquiescence is recommended to you? Do they not take every Opportunity of declaiming both publicly and privately against your Faith? Nay, and have not some of the Latter lately ventured into your Pulpits, and vented their heterodox Opinions from that Place, into which they could never have obtained an Entrance, but by declaring in the most solemn Manner against, and renouncing these very Opinions? And when every other Sect also takes the same Liberty, are you only to be debarred from it and continue in silence? No, Sirs, you are to the utmost of your Power to counteract their Attempts, and to be as frequent and earnest in defending and supporting the Truth, as they are restless in their Endeavours to destroy it; a Thing this so palpably just and reasonable, that it is to be wondered how the contrary Practice could prevail among you Gentlemen, as it must be acknowledged to have done for some Time past.

And here, altho' it may seem not so pertinent to the Matter in Hand, I cannot let this Opportunity slip me of warning you against the Principles and Practices of our Arian Clergy, into which it is well for you and for our Religion too, that but a very few of you have fallen; namely, the still retaining

in their Hands those Benefices, which they only at first got Possession of, by declaring against and renouncing in the most solemn Manner, those very Principles which they now Profess, and the being ready to do this again as often as they can get any Preferment by it; the publicly writing against these Doctrines, which they did hereby give Assurance to the Community, that they would Teach, and only Teach to the World. The condemning as Blasphemous and Idolatrous, that Service and those Prayers which they must almost as constantly use, as they perform any Office in our Liturgy; and the supporting of their Cause by such Methods as these; namely, the insisting upon the old Arguments for it, only it may be put into a new Dress, without shewing the insufficiency of these Replies, which long since have been given to them; the professing the most disinterested Regard to the Truth, nay, and sometimes declaring to the World, that they will either publicly vindicate or retract their Opinions if any Answer be given to them, and yet when this is done most clearly, and they are charged Home with the most culpable Ignorance or Dishonesty in many of the most material Instances, the neglecting to perform their Promises in either Particular, and instead of this, the having Recourse to little angry and abusive Invectives, with which to support that Doctrine which they are not able to maintain by any better Methods; and all this Time villifying the rest of their Brethren, and charging them with Prejudice, Bigottry, and a persecuting Spirit, only because they will not be convinced by such Reasonings, nor follow them in such unwarrantable Proceedings.

For these are such Doings, as no Man who is not deeply prejudiced in Favour of their Scheme, can look upon in any other Light than a scandalous Evasion of all these Obligations which ought to be held most inviolable among Men; and they must either end in a speedy Perversion of your Faith and People, or in a settled and deep Contempt of their Teachers, their crafty or their careless Teachers; neither of which I am persuaded can be brought about, but to the Ruin of the Protestant Religion; such a Weakness will it shew in your Faith, or such a Dishonesty in your Practice. But to return to my Subject, if I have indeed digressed from it, in censuring a Sect that would by such Means persuade us into the Worship of Creatures, and yet rail at the Idolatry of *Rome*, and the Arts of its deceitful Priests.

And to encourage you, Gentlemen, to this laborious Task of saving your own People, or of converting the Papists, I have

have a Reward to offer to you, which is infinitely superior to any Difficulty or Loss you can sustain by it. I have the Favour of your God to promise to you, who has shewn so great a Regard to this Business, of turning Men from Ignorance, Superstition and Idolatry, to the Knowledge of the true Religion, and the Worship of him the only God; that he made this a principal Part of the Mission, not only of the Apostles and Prophets, but even of his only begotten and eternal Son; and he will therefore receive your pious Endeavours to serve him in this Way with a high Degree of his inestimable Favour, and Crown you with a Reward hereafter proportionable to the Goodness and Acceptableness of your Work; for altho' I will not say that the Superstition and Idolatry of Christian *Rome*, are as bad as those of the Pagan, yet I will say that the Romanists are Guilty of them both, and altho' it be in a less Degree, yet in a more provoking Manner; and that your Attempts therefore to preserve or convert the People from these Errors, will be of the same Nature with that of the Apostles and their great Master, and therefore in such a Measure agreeable to our holy and good Creator; who, because he would have Men to be happy hereafter, would have them serve him, and him only, in all inward Purity and Holiness here, and not to think Religion to be a Piece of Conjurat[i]on, which the Priest is to perform for us; nor trust to his Absolution or the Merits of others for our Salvation, nor make ten Prayers to the Virgin *Mary* for one that is made to Christ.

I could wish also, that I had it in my Power to encourage you further to this Work, by assuring you that it was the best, or indeed even a likely Means of gaining you Preferment in the Church; for as we are made always to desire Happiness, it is neither unreasonable nor criminal, but a due Compliance with our Nature, to desire that which is Good in this World, as well as that which will make us happy for ever in the Life to come; but I must not so deal with you, I mean not to deceive but to speak the Truth, and must therefore Declare, that it is by Methods very different from a conscientious Discharge of your Duty, that you are like to promote yourselves in the World; but it would be too invidious an Undertaking to point them out. Much of this has certainly been always practised in the World, but never I believe so much in these Nations since the Reformation as at this Time, and I shall therefore take Notice of it.

That

That those powerful Men, who are Infidels and Enemies to Christianity, should prefer such Men as will either be of no Use, or else a Disgrace to it, is not to be wondered at; it is the surest and best Method they can take to destroy this Religion; but it is utterly unaccountable how those that believe in Christ, and have any Regard to his Faith, should think it an innocent Thing to procure or bestow the Preferments of this Church as they shall please, without having any Regard to the long Service, Worth or Fitness of the Man, but shall be totally guided in it, by Affinity, Interest, Solicitation; or, it may be, by some menial or base Service. Go into the Company of those profligate Men, whose Wickedness has made it their Interest, that there should be no Truth in the Gospel; and you will find the negligent and bad Lives of the Clergy to be the grand Argument with which they support themselves in their Unbelief and licentious Manners: but altho' their Charges against the whole Body, as far as I could ever see, are entirely void of Truth, the Behaviour of the Generality of them being such, as to merit the highest Regard and Esteem of their People; yet from the great Number they consist of, the prevailing Corruption of the Age, and the little Care that is taken to encourage the worthy Man, it is not to be denied that there are some of the Clergy, who give Cause for the Reflections which are unjustly cast upon them all. And will then any Christian Patron think it an innocent Matter, that besides the neglect of Souls which he hereby Occasions, he also contributes to, and is indeed himself, one principal Source of that Impiety both in Practice and Principle, which has been for many Years past pouring in upon us with so mighty a Torrent, that if it should continue to do so for any Time to come, it must overwhelm us all with a general Ruin? Will any Christian indeed think this an indifferent or innocent Matter, when such very dangerous and spreading Evils are occasioned by it? If he will, his Ignorance is so palpable, that it can never plead his excuse. No, he errs and is criminal too in the highest Degree by such a base Behaviour; it is a sure Way to make all Manner of Wickedness prevail, till at the last we shall have nothing but Infidels, or nothing but Papists, left among us.

But I know that our Layman will endeavour to vindicate himself by bidding us turn our Eyes to the spiritual Rulers of our Church, and observe how they behave in this Matter; and I know too, for it is talked of in every Company, that our

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profligate Gentry are ever comforting themselves in their own Impiety and Vices, by abusing these our Church Rulers for their bad Conduct in this particular, and concluding from hence, that they do not really believe one Syllable of that Religion, which they are so munificently hired to Teach. A dreadful Charge indeed, but beyond all Doubt utterly false as to the Conclusion. But if there be some that are guilty in this Way, there are others who are Innocent. I have myself known some late Examples of a most disinterested Virtue exercised upon this Occasion, and a better Acquaintance with the Rest would perhaps have furnished me with a Knowledge of some more : but it is not so with them all. I would be glad indeed to throw a Vail over this Matter, and if I could, to cover from Obloquy the most sacred Character in the Christian Church : but the Thing is not to be done : if it be unknown to themselves, it is only to them that it is so. It is every where observed, every where spoken against, and that with such Detriment to their Reputation and Religion, that there is no pretending to palliate this too prevailing Evil. For altho' this be a Fault to which we are so strongly tempted by the Weakness of our Nature, that it has a very good Claim to our Pity and Forgiveness, and some Indulgence in it will always be allowed by every considering Person ; yet as the Thing is wrong in it self, as the Custom is every Day growing to a more unjustifiable Excess, and as it is productive of the most fatal Effects to the Civil Society, the Interests of Christianity and the Salvation of Souls, they ought to be warned of their Error, and have it set before them in such a Light, that they may learn to avoid it for the Future. But I know not how it happens, that some of them seem to think that they may as well turn to their own private Emolument, those Benefices which they are obliged to give away, as those Revenues which they are allowed to retain : but if this be their Way of thinking, I must inform them, that they are absolutely singular in it, and that all the Rest of the World are of a quite different Opinion. The common Notion is, that this Power was conferred upon them as a sacred Trust, by which they, who are supposed to be best acquainted with the Merits of their Clergy, should encourage Virtue, Learning and Diligence among them, and thereby promote the Salvation of the Souls committed to the Care of them both, and not make a private Property of it. This is the general Notion of all the People, and their Notion is just. We are assured from the Gospel, that the Power I am
speaking

speaking of, was intrusted with them by Christ, not solely for their own private Good, but for the Edification and Benefit of his Church, which is to be governed by them; and the same Thing is as manifest from the Laws of the Land. Hence it is, that the selling of any Church Living is prohibited under the severest Penalties; and that the Bishop, when he gives Institution to a Parish, does, as I am informed, deliver the Right of Possession to the Man as a Part of his own Cure.

How very wrong and shameful must it therefore be, for a Person of so sacred a Character, to neglect the old worthy Curate, and to leave him to pine away his Life upon the miserable Pittance of half an Ensign's Pay, or even of an upper Servant in a polite Family, who for twenty or thirty, or even perhaps for forty Years together, has distinguished himself by his Virtue, Learning, and conscientious Discharge of his Duty, so as to be the Darling of his own People, and to have gained the Esteem of every one who is acquainted with him; whilst he every Day sees other young Fellows suddenly pushed up into the highest and richest Perferments, who have given no Signs of any such Worth, it may be indeed, have given abundant Demonstrations of the Contrary, only because they have a better Interest, were more powerfully recommended, or are the Sons or Relations, or are married to some Relation, or it may be to a favourite Maid of the Family. Shall these Things, indeed, be practised by a Man that has dedicated himself to the peculiar Service of God, has taken upon him to watch over his Church for the Salvation of all his People, as being appointed by Christ for this very Purpose, and has all the Obligations that Laws Divine or Human can lay upon him, to make him act in a quite different Manner? Were the Fleet or the Army to be managed in the same Way, the Nation could not subsist under it. And that our Religion is not yet wholly ruined, is owing to this, that this utter Neglect of Merit is not as yet become quite general, nor has been practised so long as to introduce all these Evils which it is naturally productive of. The present Set of Clergy entered into the Church when they had a better Prospect, and whilst they continue in it, this pernicious Neglect cannot Occasion much of it's evil Consequences: but a new set of Men must soon fill up their Places; and what we are to expect from hence is manifest, by the present State of our College; which does not at this Time contain half the Number of Scholars,

that studied in it twenty Years ago; nor will those among them who design to qualify themselves for officiating at the Altar, be sufficient to supply half the Vacancies which must happen in the Service of it. Nor is this to be wondered at; for can it be expected, that any Man will undertake such a Course of Study, as shall with School and College probably cost him 500 *l.* consume all his Time till he is four or five and twenty Years of Age, and disable him from following any other Business afterwards, shall require that he should appear like a Gentleman, and yet not give him more than 40 or 50 *l.* a Year, perhaps for his whole Life, and it may be for the Support of a Family too? Is it so well with Religion among us at this Time, that we can expect many of our Youth of the greatest Abilities, Virtue and Application, will take upon them that most dangerous of all Callings, the Cure of Souls, under all these Discouragements? Or that their Parents who must at first have the Direction of their Education, will permit them to do so? No certainly, but they will throw them into any other Business, which will require less Expence and Time to fit them for it, and will be like to give them a more profitable Return in the carrying it on. And if there be already such a manifest Decay of Religion among us, both in Principle and Practice, what are we to expect, when the Clergy of the established Church are mostly made up of low illiterate People, who have never had a Collegiate Education, or of those who have received it at the Universities of *Edinburgh* or *Glasgow*, and have been thereby bred up in a hearty Detestation of all these Institutes, which they are in our Church to profess and teach to our People? But the Prospect is too horrible to be dwelt upon. Let them then consider seriously of this, who have already contributed by a most criminal Neglect, so far to introduce these Evils among us, as to make them almost unavoidable in a small Course of Years. But on the other Hand, were there a proper Regard shewn to the Behaviour of the Clergy, in bestowing Preferments, were Virtue, Diligence, Abilities, and Knowledge, properly rewarded; and Viciousness, Ignorance and Neglect of Duty discountenanced in the same Proportion; we might soon hope to see a new Face of Things introduced among us, which would then be as fair and promising, as it is now black and dismal, and even frightful to every considerate Beholder.

And let no One think that this is foreign to the Business upon which I set out. We have seen that the encrease

crease of Popery can only be prevented by a vigorous Discharge of the clerical Duty ; and, I am farther to observe, that the casting off all religious Principles is a sure Way to promote it also. The Nature of Man is such, that he will have some Religion or other ; and when his Mind has been for some Time debased by a profligate Practice, the sure Parent of Misery, but is by some Misfortune brought to a Sense of it's Error ; the Popish Superstition is then so exactly suited to his Condition and Temper, as being the best fitted of all others to give Peace to his troubled Conscience, and to cheer him with the Hopes of Pardon and everlasting Happiness, that it has in this greatly the Advantage of the Protestant Principles, and can hardly fail of carrying the Man over to such a saving Faith. And, this is so far from being an over curious Speculation, that it has been observed of many of our Infidel Writers, that they have given shrewd Marks of an Inclination to Popery, and shewed abundant Cause to suspect them of a Design to further it by these Means.

And now, Gentlemen of the Laity, I turn myself to you ; although you are no Teachers of Religion, yet you have other Means in your Hands, with which you may help the Endeavours of the Clergy, and without which they will never be able to make any considerable Progress in the Work I have been recommending to them. You have the greatest Part of the Legislature, almost the whole Power of the Execution of the Laws, and the Possession of all the Land of this Kingdom in your Hands, a most inconsiderable Part excepted ; and by these Means you must have such an Influence over the People, as may be exerted to the greatest Benefit of the Protestant Cause.

It is an easy Thing to see, that they of the Church of *Rome* have the highest Inveteracy against us ; they cannot even conceal their Joy at any bad News, nor their Sorrow upon any that is good ; and it becomes us carefully to consider, whether we have not by some needless or unfit Severity deserved this at their Hands ; and whether certain Means may not be found out to abate somewhat of this Spleen, if we cannot, as indeed I fear that we cannot, whilst they continue Papists, make them our real Friends. And my Opinion is, that we may and ought to allow them a much more free and full Enjoyment of their Religion ; but should be very cautious how we entrust them with *any greater Share of Property, and consequently of Power in our State.*

It is on Mildness and Humanity that we Protestants justly value ourselves and our Religion; and I shall take it for granted, that we are all of this Temper, all Enemies to Persecution, that is, the subjecting Men to Restraints or Penalties upon Account of Conscience, which we have no Right to do, and which the Peace and Safety of the Community do not necessarily require. But it is from hence, I conclude, that our Laws against Popery are too severe. It is not to be denied by unprejudiced Persons, that the Doctrines of their Church must make them extremely dangerous to any Protestant Government; and our Forefathers have suffered so much, and so recently from them upon this Account, that it would be Stupidity, or rather Madness in us so soon to forget it. But although this will fully vindicate our Laws in tying up their Hands from all civil Power, yet, it will not in my Opinion, and I am not singular in this, vindicate our totally prohibiting the Exercise of their Religion. The Possession of this in some Degree of Freedom, appears to me as a sacred Right which no Government upon Earth has a Power to take away; and I therefore conclude, that as long as they are suffered to continue in the same Community with us, which I never will suppose refused, they ought to be allowed this Liberty. All Men think as well as they, that it is their Duty to serve God according to their present Principles, how contradictory soever this may be to all human Authority, and they think Right. To prohibit therefore this Privilege, is a most violent Invasion of the divine Prerogative, nay, and the setting up of human Authority, above that of God himself; for it is manifestly to require that Man shall be obeyed in Preference, nay, in Opposition to the Divine Being himself. And I am the more confirmed in these Sentiments, by observing, that as this Profession of their Religion could never be totally withheld from them, so has our Imprudence in attempting to destroy it, been attended with very bad Consequences: It has not lessened their Numbers or their Power, it has encreased their Hatred to us, and it has given a very unfavourable Representation of us to all foreign Popish Countries.

If our Laws were thoroughly executed, they could have no Priests, and consequently no Power of serving God according to their Consciences; but, how little soever any People may care to regulate their Practice by their Belief, yet, there is nothing which they will resent more, than the

the withholding from them this Privilege. In the one, they have all their Appetites and Passions to oppose their Reason and Virtue, in the other, to join in with them, and by this Means to exasperate their Minds to the highest Degree, and make them most effectually hate their Governors, and become more obstinate in their own Opinions. It is true, that these severe Laws against their Clergy are never put into Execution now ; and considering the very terrible Consequences which would follow from it, I hope *they* never will *be*, I am sure they will not by true Protestants, except some unlooked for abominable Provocation be given to them. But this, to me, seems a sufficient Reason why they should never have been made ; or, being so, should now be abrogated ; because, the little Good which they do by awing these People, is over-balanced by very many more weighty Evils. The Enjoyment is nearly the same to them, as if the Exercise of their Religion was not prohibited ; but, besides the bad Consequences already mentioned, by the direct Opposition between the Laws and the Practice of our Magistrates, the former of which are only represented to all Popish Governments, and the latter concealed, we give them Reason to think us most grievous Persecutors, and thereby unjustly to treat their own Protestant Subjects, who are not at all deserving of any such Rigour ; and we also, by this unexecuted Restriction, lose many very material Benefits, which we might reap from a proper Repeal of it.

Were such a Number of their Bishops and Priests permitted as might be sufficient to perform for them the tolerated Duties of their Religion, and this allowed to them under such a soft Form of Abjuration, as also, of an Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty and his Heirs, as would be least offensive to their Consciences, and might give some tolerable Security to our Government, it would produce to us the most advantageous Effects. If they refused to accept of these Offers, it would justify us to ourselves, and the whole World in any legal Restrictions which our Peace and Security should require ; and it would entirely silence that most plausible Objection which has been lately urged with such Confidence against us, that the Roman Catholics of this Country have been falsely represented as Enemies to our Government, and have therefore been cruelly treated, and unjustly persecuted by us. But, if they complied with those Conditions, which I hope is the more

likely, as I am sure it is the more eligible Alternative, we would then take away from them the greater Part of their pretended Complaints about Persecution, together, with the Necessity of their making this a Mission, whereby we are filled with that most dangerous Sort of their Clergy, the regular, instead of the secular Priests: We would destroy that great Temptation to a Rebellion, the Desire of a Liberty of Conscience, we would take away one main Cause, and, I hope too, a great Part of their Inveteracy against us; and we would have it in our Power to watch more carefully over them, and to restrain them from entering into any Measures that might be prejudicial to us.

If any Man has a Mind to see this Matter examined to the Bottom, I refer him to a Sermon preached by Mr. *Edward Synge*, now Bishop of *Elphin*, Oct. 23, 1725. where he will find it cleared up to his Satisfaction; and, indeed treated of in such a Manner, as abundantly shews how well that Gentleman deserves the high Character for Learning and Abilities, which he has so long obtained in the World. And, had I not indeed such an Authority to support me, and confirm my Reasonings, I had hardly ventured to give my Opinion so freely in a Matter of this Consequence.

Thus far have I with an open Candour delivered my Sentiments in Regard to the popish Religion; and hope that it will be received by every Protestant with the same fair and honest Intention.

But, as to the Laws against them, with Regard to Property and Power, as these are certainly just, so do I think that they are in the Main still necessary, and ought to be maintained. When we are told in Favour of our Roman Catholicks, that very many of those in other Protestant Countries, who are not under the same Restraints as with us, have yet always proved obedient and good Subjects, and joined with the rest in Defence of the State; our Answer is easy to be given, that they have not always acted in this commendable Manner with us; no, but sometimes so directly opposite to all Faith and Humanity, that it is shocking to think of it: And that the Cases are so totally different, that no good Conclusion can be drawn from the one to the other. We have a Pretender to our Throne, which none of the others have: A Pretender, whose reputed Father lost his Crown principally for his over zealous Attachment to their Religion, and whose Per-
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son is protected, and his Title maintained by that spiritual Head of their Church, the Pope, who is so nearly engaged in Interest to keep up his Claim, and by all Means possible to bring it into Effect, and who must at all Times have such a mighty Influence upon them; seeing it is acknowledged by those who write most cautiously of this Matter, that to be separated from this Head is to be cut off from the Church of Christ. And, we have besides this, a great Number of their antient Estates now in our Hands; which Estates, although most of them were forfeited for horrid and bloody Treasons, and these too committed against the Progenitors of this very Pretender; yet, we all know that the Claims to them are still kept up by the Descendants of those People, and that they are still hoping for, and ever ready to seize any Opportunity that may again put them into Possession of them. These Things make our Case so peculiar to ourselves, that there is no judging for the Protestants of this Country, from what may be the Case in other Nations of our Religion.

Only this, I think, can be said with the clearest Reason, that as a free Enjoyment of their Religion would probably in some Time greatly lessen their Antipathy to us, and thereby make them less dangerous to our Government, so then it might be prudent, as it appears to me that it would *then* become our Duty, to take off some of the Restraints continued on them in Point of Property, and make them by these Means more interested in, and thereby better disposed to promote, the Welfare of the State. That which justifies the Severity of our Laws against them, is, that it is necessary to our Peace and Safety; according then, as this becomes less necessary, it is plain, that we are bound in Duty to ease the Restraints which we have laid upon them; only with this Caution, that it be by little and little, and according as we find by their Behaviour that they have deserved it from us. And as this is entirely conformable to, and expressive of those lovely Christian Virtues of Meekness, Tenderness and brotherly Love, which we Protestants are wont, and with such high Justice too, to value ourselves upon, I cannot but wish *to see them made, as soon, as safely may be, a Part of our Policy, as they are already of our Religion.*

And now that I am speaking about our Laws against Popery, I must observe, that we have one made against the Marriage of Protestants with Papists, which, as it is
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most equitable in itself, so should we be careful to put it in the strictest Execution. I speak it from a sure Experience, that the furious and restless Zeal of the One, together, with this Maxim of their Religion, that it is lawful and meritorious to use Force for the propagating of it, does so generally prevail over the Calmness and Moderation of the other, and his Opinion of the utter Injustice and Iniquity of using any Violence for the Support of his Faith, that it rarely happens, but that the popish Husband, or Wife, gets the better of the Protestant, and the greater Part, if not the whole of their Children, are hereby bred up in all the Errors and Superstition of the Church of *Rome*. A Thing, which happens so frequently among the poorer Sort, and is of so mighty a Prejudice to the Protestant Cause, that it deserves to be looked into by our Magistrates in a very different Manner from what I have ever known it to be. And, I wish indeed, if it can be done, to see some Alteration made in this Law, in order to render it more effectual to the good Purposes for which it was designed.

Beside these, Gentlemen, you have other Means in your Hands, which are more mild and natural to our Religion, than those penal Laws, and may be made still more serviceable to *it's Advancement*.

You have almost all the Land of this Kingdom in your Possession, and a due Exertion of that Power, which this property must give you, would cause Protestantism to encrease and flourish at a very different Rate from what it has done for those 60 Years past. Do but make it your Business to get a Number of Tenants of our Persuasion, and encourage them, by setting Freeholds of small Parcels of Land at a moderate Rent, and you will soon see a new Face of Things introduced, both as to the Wealth of our Country, and the Progress of our Religion. By this Means, you will provide for the younger Sons of low Protestant Farmers, or Tradesmen, who, for want of this, are often lost to us ; you will prevent all those from marrying popish Wives, whereby so many Families are every Day perverted ; and you will have it in your Power, as I shall always suppose it in your Will, to give Encouragement to them of the Church of *Rome*, who have manifested such an uncommon Degree of Reason and Honesty, as against all their deep-rooted Prejudices, to discover and to embrace the Truth.

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It is not to be denied, that this Attempt will always be attended with some Trouble, and often too, with a considerable Expence. A proper Set of industrious Protestant Tenants will sometimes not be readily found, and a good Part of them will want a Sum of Money to set them up; you will have these among them, who will be idle, extravagant, vicious, and break to your Loss; and others of them may prove ungrateful, and fly in your Face, for your Kindness, which has raised them in the World; and your Rents, perhaps, will neither be so great, nor so regularly paid, for a good While, as if the whole of your Land was set to one wealthy Tenant. But, what is there valuable in this Life which is to be acquired without a good deal of Pains and Expence? Can your Interest in a Borough, or a County, be preserved without much of these? Nay, it may be indeed not without a great deal more of them than would be sufficient to do the most extensive Good in the Way I am recommending to you. When, therefore, you shall have an Opportunity of serving your Religion and Country in this Manner, and cannot yet find in your Heart to make a proper Use of it, you may depend upon it, that you have not that Zeal for those Things which you would make yourself believe, and, that you are indeed shamefully wanting in a due Regard to them.

But whatsoever Difficulties there may be in the Work, you will find them all overpaid in the many beneficial Effects which will be produced by it. Besides, the Advantages already mentioned, you will hereby make yourself a Man of more Consequence in your Country, you will have the Prospect of enjoying hereafter yourself, or at least, of leaving to your Heir a good Increase of Income, and you will have the high Gratification of knowing that you have served your Country and your God at once, and may therefore justly hope for that great Reward, in another Life, it may be in this also, which an infinitely beneficent Being will be sure to bestow upon such beneficent, and therefore to him such agreeable, Actions.

But it may be imagined that this Practice must be attended with great Cruelty; and, if it were generally followed, would banish almost all the popish Landholders out of this Kingdom. But, to this I answer, that all Laws divine and human, allow us to shew a proper Degree of Favour to our Friends, and to withhold it proportionably from our Enemies; and, therefore, as we must believe

lieve our own Religion to be true ; we are permitted, we are required, to encourage the Profession of it by all the just Methods we shall have in our Power. Were it however, to be attended with all the ill Consequences to them which is supposed by this Objection, I will acknowledge, that I should then think it too cruel to be executed by us ; but there are no such Mischiefs to be apprehended from it ; on the contrary, it will be productive of the greatest good to us both.

Among all the Evils by which this Nation is impoverished, there is none that is more hurtful to us, than the prevailing Custom of setting large Tracts of Land to one Man. By this Means all Tillage is neglected, our Land unimproved, and our Inhabitants left to starve, or else drove away into some other more hospitable Nation, where they may find Means of earning their Bread ; and are hereby not only lost to their Country for ever, but it may be, turned into it's most bitter and dangerous Enemies. Hence it is, also, that we are almost continually subject to Famines, and are forced for our Sustenance to import every Year as much Corn as the Produce of our Grass will amount to in two or three ; and, that we have by this Mismanagement for some Years past, reduced ourselves to such Distress, that we have hardly Money enough left to buy Bread for us, and a great Part of our People must unavoidably starve, if we do not. But however pernicious the Thing, it is notwithstanding become so general, that there is no Possibility of it's being speedily remedied ; nor have we the least Reason to fear that there will be Land wanting for popish Tenants, although we set considerable Parcels to all the Protestants we can find fit to take any ; but there will be enough for them both for some Centuries to come. There is therefore no just Objection to be made to this Practice ; and, if our Protestants of Fortune have any Regard for themselves, their Posterity, their Country, or their Religion, they will generally fall into this Scheme, which is so extremely beneficial to them all.

Another Thing, Gentlemen, which I would recommend to you, in order to spread your Religion among the People, is to shew some Regard yourselves to that which you profess. I know, indeed, that many of you will be surprized at my Advice, and hardly think I am in my Senses, when I offer such a Thing to your Consideration.

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But, I must beg your Patience, whilst I lay before you the Reasons which have compelled me to *entertain a Sentiment which may seem so paradoxical*. I know, that for forty or fifty Years past, it has been reckoned by our most zealous and powerful Protestants, the very best Way to promote this Religion, to have no Religion at all themselves, or, if they have any, to be as far Distant as possible from that Kind of Christianity which is professed in our Church; to abuse the Doctrines and Rites of it in every Conversation, and in all Kinds of Company, in which also they are always to take care that the Clergy of it come in for a large Portion; to be continually repining at the handsome Fortunes which some of them possess, and to seize every safe Opportunity of embarrassing those hateful People in their Maintenance, and of stripping them of every Farthing that the Chicanery of the Law and Lawyers, and the Willingness of the Bench or the Jury will permit to be taken from them; never to go into one of their Churches except it be to qualify, and to be sure all the Time you are there, to shew an utter Contempt for the silly tedious Service, which by this Means, you are obliged for this Time to be present at. I know, and do acknowledge, that this, for a long Time, has been the constant and avowed Practice of many of our most staunch and zealous Protestants, and that it has been particularly countenanced by the Example and Patronage of the Great. I confess it also to be a most desirable and glorious Privilege of a Protestant, to be freed from all the Trammels of Priestcraft, to be set above all the Fears and Hopes of a Life after this, and to have a Conscience which shall never be troubled with any Remorse, I will also acknowledge it to be of the greatest Service to all powerful Men, to have a set of People under them, of such pliable Dispositions, that they will be ready to do them any Service, without being stopped by the many foolish Qualms which will arise in other weak Persons Minds, and who will always be sure to stick to them till their Services shall be canted by some others to a higher Price.

But still, although I do allow all those Privileges of Grandeur to be established with such a general and long received Consent of the High and Great, that it must be Rashness, or rather Folly to dispute the Justness of them; yet, I cannot but observe, that some Caution must be used in these Matters, or else we shall be so far from
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advancing the Protestant Cause, for which it is well known that all these Gentlemen have the heartiest Zeal, that we shall do it a great Deal of Prejudice. For, if in the Abundance of his Protestant Liberty, this great Man shall make freer with this Family, Character, or Property of his popish Neighbour, than this Papist shall in his Bigotry think Right; if he shall employ all the Neighbourhood in his Work, and never trouble himself to pay them afterwards; if his Tenants of the Romish Religion shall think themselves hardly treated, because after exacting the highest Price for his Land, he shall take all that they have for speedy Payment; when, by a little Forbearance, they and their Families might have been saved from being turned out to beg; if for Health, or Exercise, or to work off a Fit of ill Humour, or of Drinking, or to shew his Power, he shall break through all the Fences that are within some Miles of him, tread down the Peoples Corn, and destroy their Improvements; if, in the Fervour of his Zeal against the persecuting Spirit of the Papists, he shall by game Acts, and penal Statutes, often force these People to accompany him to the Assizes, and Sessions, and shall burn their Mass-houses, and banish, imprison and transport their Priest: If, by such Amusements as these, however just and innocent in his own Eyes, he shall distress and vex these poor People; is it not plain, that this must Prejudice them against such Protestant Principles, and make them the more hard to be converted to us? Or, if without going to those Lengths, our Gentlemen shall take up only with the fore-mentioned general Entertainment of our Men of Fortune, of constantly abusing their own Clergy and Religion, and living in a continued Neglect of it, or it may be in a direct Opposition to every Precept of it, must not this cause these very ignorant Men to have a worse Opinion of our Belief, and make them the less inclinable to come over to it? To me, it appears not to be the best Way to convert them, to have our own Clergy represented to them as a Set of the most profligate Villains, who are a Pest to Society, and, who ought by any Means to be destroyed or banished from it, when yet, it must be by their Instructions either verbal, or written, that they are to be made Protestants, and when there does not appear that there is any Thing else to make them these bad Men, except it be some Fault in the Religion they teach. Besides, as far as my Experience has reached, and I can claim

claim a good deal in this Matter, I have always found the Papists so deeply prejudiced in Favour of Christianity, that they have really esteemed that Name, and thought the better of themselves for having a Title to be called by it; it is plain, therefore, that they must be more easily converted to our Religion, by the Offering it to them as the true Faith of Christ, and as a purer Profession of this, than what is to be found in their own Church, than if we shall openly declare it to be that Doctrine, if a Doctrine at all, which *Shaftsbury, Tindal, Collins, Hume, Bollingbroke, &c. &c.* have preached up to the World. We all know, that it is one material Tenet of theirs, that they themselves are the only true Christians, and must not your denying this Religion, both in the most open Profession and Practice, give a seeming Countenance to this Opinion, and make them think that they have judged rightly in it? Undoubtedly it must; and it is plain, at first Sight, that nothing can be of greater Advantage to their Cause, nor detriment to ours, than such a Conviction as this.

I have also to add to this, that as it is a Qualification absolutely necessary to their becoming legal Protestants, that they make their Recantation in our Churches, as the Form of this has, I know not how, been most injudiciously drawn up in a very solemn and affecting Stile, and as the whole proceeds upon a Supposition of their joining themselves to our Religion, which professes to be Christianity, and not Deism or Atheism, it is manifest that we cannot with so good a Grace desire them to abandon their own Church and come over to ours, if it be not the Faith of Christ, but the Belief of those forementioned great and enlightned Authors, which we are to Offer in it's stead.

Upon the whole then, altho' I am neither so wrong-headed nor so utterly unacquainted with the polite or grand World, as to recommend to these Gentry the real Belief of any Religion at all; yet thus much I must insist upon, as absolutely necessary to the good of the Protestant Cause, which certainly is the Cause of civil Liberty, and perhaps of our Property also, that they preserve some greater Decorum in these Matters, than has been usual with the most of them for some Time past, and that instead of openly publishing their Detestation of our established Church in particular, and of Christianity in general, and of shewing throughout the whole of their Lives, the most violent Antipathy to them; that they should endeavour

deavour a little to disguise those Opinions, and put on an outward Appearance at least of their having some Regard to them both.

I know, indeed, some People who are of Opinion, that we should go yet farther than this, and that the best Way to recommend and promote our Religion, is to have all the Principles of it most deeply imprinted in the Heart, and exemplified in the Life of every Professor of it. For let us suppose, say they, that a Gentleman of large Fortune Interest and Power, shews by his private, his family, and his publick Devotions, that he really believes in and worships the same God and Redeemer with the Romanists, and by the uninterrupted Purity, Justice and Charitableness of all his Actions, proves himself to look for the blessed Rewards of Virtue in another Life; that altho' he utterly Condemns their Religion, yet he does not hate them for professing it, and will never hurt them on this Account, but still be ready to do them all the good Offices he can; but that as he esteems and loves his own Church in the highest Degree, so does he think it by all fair Means necessary for him to encourage and promote the Religion of it, and will therefore, always be ready to Protect and Reward those who have become Converts to it, and not Neglect or Despise them, as is now impolitickly and scandalously but most generally the Case with us. Let us, say they, suppose a Gentleman of Fortune and Interest to act in this Manner, and it will probably be followed by the Conversion of some, and the Confirmation of many. The Example of the Great, will ever have a mighty Influence to draw after it those of a lower Rank: but an Example so amiable, so beneficial, so striking as this, must affect them in the highest Degree, and be attended with happy Consequences as far as it is known. This is the Way of reasoning among some seemingly sensible People whom I have known; and if any of our Gentry have a Mind to try this Experiment and follow the Pattern here chalked out for them, they have my full Consent to do so, altho' from the utter Unreasonableness of expecting such a severe unfashionable antiquated Practice in this more free and enlightned Age, I forbore directly to recommend it to them.

And here, I think, I may throw in a Piece of Advice to our Converts from Popery, some of whom by an ill chosen Method of acting, not only bring Disgrace upon themselves, but do considerably prejudice that Cause, to which their
Conversion

Conversion has done so great an Honour ; and, as from the conspicuous Point of View, in which these Gentlemen are hereby placed, from the Pains which they have taken to study and know both Sides of the Question, from the fervent Zeal wherewith they must be warmed for that Religion which upon Tryal they have found so true and pure, and which has delivered them from a Church so false and dangerous, and from the Influence they may still retain over many of their former Friends, it must be much in their Power to obstruct or further the Propagation of our Religion. I think it therefore of great Consequence to shew those Converts the Absurdity of villifying that by their Conduct, which they have so highly honoured by their Profession, as if they had nothing but Profit to guide them in their Choice.

It is too general a Custom amongst them, once they have been at Church to make their Recantation, seldom or never to shew themselves there again ; as also, readily to join in with any of our own People, to distress or abuse our Clergy, or rather indeed, to be more frequent, open and violent in it, than any of the Rest ; but did they reflect for one Moment upon the extream Injustice and Mischief of such a Proceeding, Mischief even to that Cause for which they are all so zealously affected, they would certainly abstain from it. The ill Effects of this have been already shewn, and I have therefore only to observe, that the higher these Gentlemen are raised in the World, the more Mischief must this their bad Conduct do, and that it is an unhappy Thing for us and for themselves, that so many of our converted Lawyers have fallen into this Fault. I know that the immortal *Swift* used to blame the Study of the Law, for not being fitted to produce any one good Quality in the Breast of him who had applied himself the most to it ; but however great and penetrating the Man's Genius, yet in this he was manifestly mistaken ; for we frequently find, that a close Study of it here at home for a Year or two, together with a Couple more spent abroad at the Temple, fills the Mind with such a true Knowledge of Divinity, and the Heart with such an unbiassed Integrity and disinterested Regard to the Truth, that many of our young Practitioners, who have entered rank Papists, upon this Course of reading, have thereby been made staunch Protestants ; and there is no one who is ever so little acquainted with our Bar, but must know that we have from hence obtained many of our most able

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Lawyers,

Lawyers, who by this Means have done equal Honour both to themselves and us. Now as these Gentlemen, both by their Profession and their Eminence in it, must be of great Advantage or Detriment to our Cause, it is of the last Importance to shew them their Mistake, and convince them that their Behaviour is wrong.

I know they can plead the Example of almost all our old Protestant Lawyers for never going into a Church, and for seizing with the utmost Eagerness any Opportunity to hurt the Characters or Fortunes of our Clergy. I am also told, that some of them have been so keen at these Sports of the *Bar*, that they have dwelt for an Hour together in their Harrangues upon this delightful Theme, when it had little or nothing to do with the Business in Hand; nay, I have been farther informed, that some of them have undertaken this Matter, when they have not been Feed in the Cause; a Thing which is so directly contrary to the long received, and the most undoubtedly ancient Practice of our Courts, that I am assured it has never been complied with, but when a Brother Lawyer has been concerned in the Suit, and that even in this Case, the Custom has been of late much disused, and is now nearly banished from among them. And I know, and have allowed it, that they can also plead the Example of almost all our great Men, in their own Vindication. But they who are acquainted with the most refined Distinctions, should consider, that there is a manifest Difference in those Cases, which will make it extremely unsafe for them to conclude from the one to the other.

For as their Conversion to us will not much increase the Love of their former Friends, so neither, will it so totally possess our People in their Favour, but that many of them will look into their Conduct with a sharp and penetrating, and some of them even with a malicious Eye. And therefore, altho' we will allow all such Practices to be carried on to the utmost length, by these never to be doubted Friends to our Religion and Government, the Descendants of *Oliver's* Soldiers, or of purchasing Bishops, or of those, from among the Presbyterians, who, because they have thought nothing in Christianity worth their being singular for, have professed to conform to our Church; altho' we will allow all these Gentlemen not only to do all those Things, but to abuse our Religion into the Bargain, and to divert themselves as often and as publicly as they please, with the many Blunders and Absurdities of the Gospel Revelation, and nevertheless to pass Muster as the most staunch

staunch Protestants and Subjects ; yet those other must take Care how they follow the Example of the above privileged Personages, for no such Allowances will be made to them ; who considering from whence they have come, will certainly be suspected of having more sinister Designs *in View*. Indeed when their Families have been Protestants for a Generation or two, we will then allow their Children to Act as other Protestant Children do, to abuse as childishly as they please the Fathers of their own and all other Churches, and to indulge in all the forementioned fashionable and innocent Gayeties ; but as for those who have themselves been converted to us, I know *it to be Fact*, our People expect it from them, that in making their Recantation from Popery, they should make it to our Church, and not to no Religion at all ; and it is hardly to be imagined with what Severity they will examine their Actions, and what strange Censures they will often pass upon them. For altho' in almost every other Instance, we will be ready to join in any Clamour against our own Clergy, yet here we will always take their Parts, and in this Particular with such a Fervour, as these Gentlemen who are not so well acquainted with us, can hardly imagine. We will say that they have not deserved such Treatment at their Hands. We shall pity them, and interest ourselves in their Defence, when worried by these too recent Converts, from a Church accustomed to roast them at a more literal Fire, and then many of our People, by the most unjust reasoning in the World, will at once conclude, that such Converts have recanted nothing but a Profession, or else, have abandoned all Religion, when they renounced the Errors of the Popish Faith.

And thus it is that I have with great Pity heard some of those Gentlemen declaiming against our Protestant Clergy with great Violence to a Protestant Audience, and exulting in the Smiles which sat upon every Countenance, as the highest Approbation of their Conduct, when all the while I knew that it proceeded from a quite different Cause ; namely, that they were in Truth laughing at their Folly, for thus weakly betraying themselves in the forementioned Manner.

And indeed, if we consider that the Laity of the Church of Rome, are wont to shew their Priests a great deal of Respect, hardly one of them being ever known to throw any Indignity upon their Persons, or Abuse on their Character ; that our Protestant Priests are not much inferior

to them, in Morals, Learning, Birth, or polite Behaviour; that they certainly exceed them in the Moderation of their Principles, they neither arrogating to themselves such an Authority over the Understandings of Men, nor such a Power to save or damn their Souls, and that therefore they deserve to be treated nearly as well by their People as the Priests are by theirs; if those Things be considered in any tolerable Manner, it will appear that the extreme Eagerness which many of our Converts shew to hurt our Clergy, affords too much seeming Grounds for those malicious silly Protestant Conclusions, that it is to a hatred of this Religion, of which they are the Ministers, and not to any Demerit of the aforesaid Clergy, that such Treatment is given them by these their newly begotten Sons.

To me it is evident, that these Converts railing at our Clergy, and endeavouring to distress and impoverish them by all possible Ways and Means, is owing to no other Principles or Motives, but those which the Independent Whig proceeds on; namely, to humble, correct and discipline the Clergy, in order to make them by their future Behaviour, to do more Honour to Christianity and the Reformation, than without such Discipline is like to be done by them. As we all know the Authors of the above mentioned Book, to have been the most sincere and zealous Christians, so I must insist upon it that those Gentlemen of whom I am speaking, as they proceed upon the same Motives, and by the same Methods, should also be reckoned as equally good Christians; for what Justness is there in this Reasoning, that neither of these can believe in Christ, because they jest with Christianity, nor be true Protestants, only because they endeavour forsooth, to pull down that Church which by some People has been weakly accounted the Bulwark of the Reformation.

But in this wrong Belief are those silly People further confirmed, by observing that these Converts are never to be seen in any of our Churches. It is true, and has been allowed, that this is the Case of all their Brother Lawyers, and of all the most powerful Men in the Nation; but how perswasive soever such an Example may seem, yet it is to be considered, that we Protestants profess to govern ourselves by Reason and not by Authority, and are therefore obliged not to follow implicitly the Pattern which any Persons whatsoever may have set us; but to examine the Matter closely, and then to regulate our Conduct, by what we have found to be

be right. To me it appears manifest that this Practice is entirely wrong; but before I proceed to lay my Motives for this Judgment before the Reader, let me be permitted to try whether I cannot by some just Reasoning, abate some Part of the Weight, which such an Authority may seem to carry with it.

Some Time ago, upon endeavouring to convince a Papist of the Weakness and Falsity of his Religion, he gave me this Reply, That he could never believe the Pope, the Cardinals and all their great Men, who were so highly exalted in Character, Wealth and Power, should be mistaken in their Religion, and that he would therefore hold inviolably to what they had taught him. I must Confess myself to have been for some Time stunned with this Answer; at first I was going to offer it in our Vindication, that we also had our great Men on our Side, but upon a little Recollection, as the Man appeared to have good Sense in other Matters, and some Share of Experience, I thought it best to forbear this Argument, and only said in return, that possibly these Men had not obtained their high Preferment for their Knowledge or Virtue, or by the most conscientious Methods; and how Strange soever it might seem, that a Man of so many thousands a Year should be mistaken in any Thing, yet certainly it was so, by their very different Opinions in many Matters; that great Riches and Power did not always beget the greatest Integrity and Wisdom in the Possessor, nor render it impossible for him to deceive or be deceived; but that at all Adventures it was a Tenet of ours, not to trust implicitly to any Man, but to examine and judge for ourselves of the Merits of the Cause by our best Abilities, and therefore his Argument was not good with us. And now luckily for me, I have found the great Use of this Reasoning in the Argument I am entering upon, which without this, I might have thought too Powerful for me to overthrow.

It will not, I suppose, be denied me, that a Knowledge of Divinity, I should say, of the Christian Scheme of Belief and Worship, is no more to be acquired without some Instruction and Study, than that of any other Branch of Learning: And, I think, in closely examining the Education of our great Man in his Youth, and his Means of Knowledge afterwards, that he cannot be so thoroughly acquainted with the Matter in Debate, as to make his Opinion a decisive Proof for his Side of the Question. It seems manifest to me, but I speak it with all due Deference

to better Judgments, that the Education of People of high Fortune, is rather at this Time calculated to preserve them from all Prejudice in favour of our Religion, than to fill their Minds with a distinguishing Knowledge of the Doctrines of it.

As to our young Master's Instruction in his most tender Years, it is not to be expected that his Father should have any Hand at all in it; his Business and more manly Diversions must put this entirely out of his Power; nor indeed can his Mother, from whom one might otherwise hope much, be able to do any Thing considerable in the Work; for what with the necessary Business of Dress, Shopping, Visits to be received and paid, Dinners, private Parties at Cards, Drums, Plays, Concerts, Assemblies, and publick Nights at Court, and an infinite Number of other Avocations, by which she is kept up till three or four o'Clock in the Morning, and can hardly get out of Bed till eleven or twelve at Noon, her Time is so necessarily and totally engrossed, that she cannot find Leisure to look into the most important Affairs of her Family, and much less to spend any Time upon the Instruction of her Children. Our young Master must therefore be entirely left to the Care of Servants; and as these People may not be the best fitted in the World, for giving him a proper Knowledge of Christianity, so may they neither be the most industrious to impart to him the little they know. It may therefore happen that young Master has not even in his Childhood, acquired any considerable Knowledge of Religion: but let us suppose the best that may be, and allow that he has come out of the Women's Hands, with all the understanding in these Matters, which is usually found in Children of seven or eight Years of Age; yet we all know that it is the Glory of the present Age not to suffer Things of this Kind to be taken upon Trust, but to have our young Gentleman, as he grows into riper Years, educated in such a Way, as that he may judge of these Things without having the least Bias upon his tender Mind in favour of Christianity. For this Purpose instead of being sent out to a public School, where he must drudge like other meaner Children, be quite spoiled with the Conversation of mean low dirty Boys, and have his Mind filled with all the silly Prejudices in favour of his Country and Religion, which are wont to prevail among the Vulgar of every Nation, he shall have his Education given him at home, and a Tutor provided for him, who is a great admirer of

Tindal,

Tindal, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, &c. and who, by putting these Authors into his Hands to consult instead of the Bible (which I hear it was the Fashion to make them read even among the great People half a Century ago) and by instilling their Principles into him, at every leisure Hour, shall be sure to keep his Mind free and untainted from all Kind of religious Prejudice. And to carry on this Business the better, Care shall be taken that he shall never see any Thing of Religion practised in his Father's House, nor hear any Talk about it, except it be to expose the Cheats and Mischiefs of Priest-Craft and Bigotry; but it may be, shall sometimes have this Lesson enforced upon him, by what he must observe both in the Lives of the Family, and the Measures which are taken to support or increase their Interest and Power. From hence, when he is about fourteen or fifteen Years of Age, he shall with the same good Intention, be sent over with his Preceptor to a foreign Academy, where he shall be taught to speak French, Ride, Fence and Dance, all which will be more likely to set him off to Advantage, and promote him in the World, than any the antiquated pedantick Acquirements which he might obtain at the College. And where, from being educated in a Country of Popery and arbitrary Power, he may be thoroughly qualified to act all his Life after, in the proper Character of a Freeman and a Protestant. Or if this be not so soon done, and he is suffered to continue at home, till he is become quite a Man, and a good deal initiated into the modish World, being now arrived at his seventeenth or eighteenth Year; yet then, at the latest, he is sent out upon his Travels; and altho' possibly with a new Governor, yet certainly without any Change of Principles in the Man, he being entirely of the same Opinion with the former, and differing from him only in this, that he is of a higher Character, and more polished and knowing in the Ways of the World. And now when our young Gentleman has spent a Year or two abroad, in tasting all the various Pleasures which are to be met at the several Courts he has passed through, and in getting acquainted with all their greatest Rarities of Meat, Wine, Cookery, Dress and Diversions, he returns home to his own Country, a thoroughly accomplished and compleatly finished Gentleman; having in the mean Time contracted a high Esteem for every Thing which he has met with in foreign Nations, and a proportionable Contempt for every Thing which can be found in his own;

and having never seen any Thing of Religion, since he was nine or ten Years of Age, but what he was taught to look upon as an Imposture, except some cunning Priest has had the Address to perswade him into a favourable Opinion of the Church of *Rome*.

Now altho' it must be confessed that this is an admirably well contrived Method, to hinder our high born Youth from being prejudiced in favour of the Religion of his Country; yet it must be acknowledged at the same Time, that it is not the fittest possible to give him an exact Knowledge of the Doctrines of it.

Nor do I think that this young Gentleman's Means of Information afterwards, are the best calculated to make him excel in this Matter. It seems plainly necessary for this Purpose, that he should read something more of the Bible, upon which Book this Religion is founded, than what he may have found quoted in the forcited great Writers; and indeed if he has a Mind to make himself thoroughly acquainted either with the Nature or Truth of it, that he should carefully peruse and thoroughly consider the whole of it. Nor would it be amiss neither, that he should have studied some of those Authors, who have stood up in Defence of Christianity, and candidly heard what they have to say in its Behalf. But as this would be a most tedious and disagreeable Work, a Work which would equally interfere with his Inclinations, Business and Pleasure, it is not to be expected that he should take so much Pains as are necessary to make him a Proficient in it. If we consider what a great deal of Employment he must have in establishing his Interest in the Country, in serving or opposing the Ministry, in his Attendance upon the Parliament House, in Dressing, and an endless Number of other Avocations; we shall find that he can hardly have Leisure to follow his most necessary and beloved Amusements: And if we consider on the other Hand, with what an utter Indifference he has always been taught to look upon this insignificant Thing Religion, and how much he must oppose his own Inclinations, and the entire Bent of Genius, which his Education has given him, in making such a long and painful Enquiry about it, and how it might go near either to frighten him from his Pleasures, or to destroy all his Relish in them: If we consider of these Things in any proper Manner, we must be sensible that this is in Truth a very needless Trouble, which cannot with any Reason be expected from him.

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I have indeed known some retired bookish Pedants, who spent too much Time in their Studies to be at all acquainted with what is doing abroad in the polite World, to affirm, that these Matters are carried at this Time out of all Measure into the Extreme on the other Side; and that these Proceedings are only fitted, not to root all Prejudices out of Mens Minds, but to fill them with the worst, basest and most dangerous of them all; namely, with a violent Contempt for, and an utter Aversion from, every Thing which can be called Religion: For they have reasoned in this Manner. There is not that Indifference in human Nature to Virtue or Vice, which will render it a Matter of no Consequence how our Youth are educated; but they ought by all the Means in our Power to be perswaded and constantly inured to the former, to be discouraged from, and habituated against the latter. That this has always been the Practice of every Nation, which was remarkable for their Bravery, their Power, or their Prosperity; but that it was a Degree of Madness reserved for the Freethinkers of our Age, not only to neglect all this, but to breed up our young Gentlemen of the greatest Fortune and Figure in such a Way as to give all the Advantages to Vice and Profaneness, the Disadvantages to Religion and Morality; that such an Education as this, must utterly disqualify the Man from having any Knowledge or Sense of Religion; and that therefore his Example or Precept ought to have no Kind of Influence upon a reasonable or virtuous Christian, except it was to make him act in a direct Opposition to every Thing which the other should approve or practise: And from hence have they proceeded to lament with a Feelingness that is, to be sure, worthy of a more rational Foundation, not only the Mischief which our Religion has already suffered by these Means, but the Prejudice which they must do to the civil Society; charging these Principles with striking off the better half of our Attachment to our present Government, with debasing the Mind to such a Degree, as to make the Man no longer fit for our free Constitution; with leaving him nothing at all to hope for, and giving him so much to fear in another Life, as must make him a Coward in any Danger; with taking away all those Motives which are most powerful to make a Man serve his Country or his Neighbour, with setting Men loose from all those Restraints, which alone can preserve either private or publick Peace and Happiness; and with introducing such a Scene of Venality, Corruption, exorbitant Love of Pleasure, Idleness,

Idleness, Fraud, Violence, and Rapine, as must prove fatal to any Community, when from Fashions among the Great, they grow into Habits among the Vulgar; and denouncing with Assurance, that the Ruin of that Nation must be at hand, when to profess such Principles is made a Matter of Credit, and to act upon them a Step to Preferment. And hence have they painted the Man out in such Colours, as no Title, Place, or Power, can make him the Object of Esteem or Imitation, can redeem him from the most deserved Contempt and Infamy.

But without carrying Matters to the Extremes which the confined Education of these ill bred People has led them into, I think it has been abundantly shewn, that the Knowledge of these elevated Personages, with Regard to the Doctrines of Christianity, is often not so great, as their high Station in the World may seem to insinuate; and that our People of lower Rank, should not take their Authority for a sufficient Vindication of their Practice; but would do well, rather themselves to examine their Bibles, and see what is there declared upon this Head.

And now that I have removed this great stumbling Block out of my Way, I proceed to my Proofs about this Matter, which will, I hope, shew, that no Reasonings, no Example whatsoever, can vindicate that Neglect of our publick Worship, which is daily encreasing upon us. But to prevent the genteel Reader from being made sick, or set asleep by the Discourse, I shall make it as short as possible, and only hint at the great Proofs which I have to give upon this Head: And I would entreat him if it be only for Novelty Sake, and because he has certainly never read a Sermon in his Life, nor heard above one or two since he was ten Years of Age, not to throw it away at once, but to have the Patience to see and consider what can be said upon a Subject so new, and it may be so diverting to him.

It is undeniably manifest, that a Belief of Christianity does require the Belief of a God who made this World, of a Saviour Jesus Christ who redeemed it, and of a divine Providence constantly presiding over and directing all Things in it; and does also include a Belief that this God is the greatest Lover of Virtue, and Hater of Vice, and that he will in another Life manifest this to an infinite Degree, by punishing the Wicked, and rewarding the Virtuous according to their different Behaviours in this World. This is most manifest, and I think it as plain also, that the Foundation upon which Christianity, and indeed all Religion both natural and revealed

is built, must be this; that besides having an inward Conviction of these great Truths in our Minds, we do also shew forth our Belief of them by a Set of outward and visible Actions, which shall manifest this to the World.

That we should entertain in our Minds all proper Sentiments of Love, Gratitude, Honour and Obedience to our great Maker, Governor, Inspector, Judge, for all that he has done and is still doing for us; that we should make Expressions of those Things, not only from our Minds, but by our Bodies also, which are a Part of us and partake of his Benefits, and so fall into the Practice of Prayer and outward Adoration: that it is our Duty to keep up a proper Sense of them, both in ourselves and others, which, can be done only by some outward and sensible Actions; all these Things seem plainly deducible from Reason alone; and we have this mighty Confirmation of the Matter, that there never has been a People in this World who have not thought and practised in this Manner: But this is still more clearly made out by Revelation.

As soon as Man was created, and whilst he was yet in a State of Innocence, a Sabbath of publick Rest was enacted, to preserve and manifest Man's Sense of these Obligations, and doubtless also a Sabbath of publick Worship, for so much is necessarily implied by the Order, to sanctify and make holy this Day. When Man was fallen, there is as little Doubt but Sacrifices were also appointed, which we find to have been offered immediately after the Fall, and which were so proper for the Condition of Mankind at that Time; and these by the Offerings, the Prayers that were wont to be made at them, the Priest, the Altar, and some other Distinctions made this a still more open and publick Worship of God.

But if we be any Thing short or obscure in our Proofs before the Law, through the extreme Conciseness of the History which gives us an Account of this Period; all this is abundantly cleared up by the Fullness of the Jewish Policy, which God afterwards established by *Moses*: For as the whole of this was founded upon the Certainty of God's having at first made the World, and still governing it by a wise, good, and particular Providence; all of which he had manifested by a most astonishing Series of Miracles, both in the Deliverance of his People from their *Egyptian* Bondage, and by their Government afterwards in their own Land; so did this Religion absolutely require that an open, a publick, and an avowed Acknowledgment should constantly be made of these Things;

Things; and for this Purpose were their Sabbaths, and Feasts of publick Rest, their Offerings, Sacrifices, Prayers, Hymns, their Temple, their Priests, their Tythes, and the whole of their Constitution appointed.

And Christianity has not made any Repeal in this Law: it has indeed by the one infinitely valuable Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, for ever superseded all the bloody Rites of *Moses*, which were in Comparison but worthless Prefigurations of it; and by the entire Reasonableness and Spirituality of it's Service abolished all the carnal and ceremonial Performances of the Jews. But still as the Reasons for this outward Profession of our Religion remain good to us Christians, so are we obliged to make this Profession by the outward Means of our Sabbath, and publick Prayers, and the Administration of the Sacraments.

Because our Saviour rose from the Dead, by which he compleated the Redemption of Mankind, on the first Day of the Week, our Sabbath has been translated from the Jewish *Saturday* to the Christian *Sunday*; and we Believers in Christ have not only God's Creation and Government of the World to commemorate thereby, but the Redemption of it also by the Incarnation and Death of his only begotten Son; a new and additional Motive this for our distinguishing this by a publick Rest, and also by the great Duty of publick Prayer, without the latter of which, the former indeed would be of no Consequence, nor at all discharge the Duty of the Day.

No sooner is a Christian Church gathered, than they meet together in publick Prayer, and that this was a Custom necessarily to be observed by all Christians, we find by the Apostles often speaking of it afterwards, giving Directions for the more orderly and proper Performance of this Duty, commanding us not to forsake it in the most dangerous Times of Persecution; and by our Saviour's promising a most gracious Acceptance of our Service, where Numbers join in the Petitions.

And as Christianity has added a new Motive of Gratitude, so has it also furnished us with new Means for making our publick Acknowledgment to this infinitely gracious God; we are admitted into the Christian Covenant by Baptism; and as this is an open and publick Rite by which we are all united into one Body, under one Head, so does it manifestly require that we should keep up this Union with him our God and Redeemer, and with each other, by some joint Service which shall answer to this Purpose, and publick
Prayer

Prayer with the other Sacrament, is the only means by which we can do this, and is indeed most nobly Expressive of it. For as in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we are on the one part to make a joint and publick Acknowledgment of our being redeemed by the Incarnation and Death of Christ, upon which this Rite has with *St. Paul* obtained the Name of a Communion, and in our Church is justly required not to be celebrated but where there is some Congregation to partake of it; so on the other Hand, is it to be a Means of uniting us both to our Head and to each other, *1 Cor. x. 16, 17*. And it is only by our Observance of these Duties, that we can keep our selves that distinct and visible People of God, which Christianity requires us to be; or indeed, can at all preserve or continue according to our most indispensable Duty, this Religion in the World.

Upon the whole then, I think it certain, that no human Authority, how great and dignified soever, can vindicate a Christian in the Neglect of the publick Worship of God; and that the Wilful and Persevered in absenting himself from this Service, whatsoever the Man himself may intend by it, is in reality a renouncing of the Death of Christ, and a casting away of all Title to his Merits; the Effects of which, we all know, must be unavoidable Destruction to his unhappy Soul.

Another Thing which I must recommend to you, Gentlemen, is, that you would again interest your selves in the Care and Management of the Charter Schools. That the Institution of these must be of the greatest Advantage, both to our Religion and Civil Interests, is a Truth so universally confessed, that nothing needs be said in the Confirmation of it. But this Conviction which had at the first such a happy Influence upon us, and made us exert our selves to so high a Degree in the Propagation and Conduct of them, has, if I am rightly informed, began to decrease much in its Warmth, and is now fallen into such a dead and unreasonable Languor, that hardly any but the Clergy, do at this Time, intermeddle in these Matters. That these Gentlemen are above all others, fitted for the Government and Inspection of these Schools, and that their Management of them has hitherto been such as to deserve the Approbation and Thanks of the Publick, is a Thing not to be disputed.

But still your Assistance will be necessary: they can never carry them on to their desired Perfection, without having your helping Hands to further their Undertakings, both in
supporting

supporting and managing these Seminaries, and the Disposal of the Children afterwards.

To any one who is acquainted with the several Parts of this Kingdom, and the Places of our Charter Schools, it must appear that there are still a great many more of them wanting; and that the Fund hitherto granted by Parliament for this Intent, is not near so great as the Importance and Usefulness of the Work deserves; your Endeavours therefore are still wanting to propagate more of these Seminaries, and to grant larger Supplies for the Maintenance of them. By this means we may hope to see even in our own Times, a profitable Produce of our Labour; but if we let the Affair creep on in the same slow and feeble Pace with which it has hitherto proceeded, our Childrens Children will but begin to experience a little Benefit from it.

Beside, your Inspection of these Schools, will in almost all Places be necessary to give Credit to the Business, and to prevent many Abuses which will otherwise creep in, in spite of all the Care which the Clergy by themselves can take of them; and your constant Attendance at their Boards, will take off an Objection which some silly, or evil-minded People have already raised against this most useful Undertaking, to excuse I suppose their not contributing to it, that the whole Management of this Affair has now got into the Hands of the Clergy, when no Abuse whatsoever has hitherto been discovered in their Conduct, when the Laity may have as great a Share in it as they please, and it is entirely owing to their own Fault, that the Government of these Schools is not almost wholly in their own Hands.

And now I might draw to a Conclusion, but in order to prevent that Apostacy from our Religion, which is so very prevalent among our Men of high Rank and Power; or if this cannot be done, to put a Stop at least to that unaccountable Ardour with which many of them are ever endeavouring to destroy our Clergy, and consequently our Religion; if they have not yet considered the inestimable Benefits which arise to the Publick, from such an Institution in both these Particulars, as is established in our Church, and I may be certain that they never have, I would intreat them to have the Patience to let me play the Divine again, and to read in the following short Account, a most imperfect Representation of them.

Let them consider that we are commanded by this Religion, to be temperate, chaste, sober, contented with our own

own Condition, diligent in our Callings, frugal in our Expences, careful and provident for our Families ; to be true and honest in all our Words and Dealings, tender Hearted, loving, charitable, avoiding every Oppression or Injury, bearing our selves, that we may forbear with others ; extensive to our Power in doing the greatest Service to each other, even to our Enemies, forgiving all Manner of Injuries, and for Evil returning Good : if we be in Authority, to govern with the strictest Justice, Diligence and a compassionate Heart ; and wherein soever we be in Subjection to give all proper Honour to our Superiors, and obey with a chearful Readiness all their lawful Commands : Let them consider how extremely Beneficial these Things would prove to the Health, the Life, the Peace of Mind, the Quiet, the Fortunes, the Families of our Selves, our Neighbours, and the whole Community ; and what innumerable Mischiefs they would save us from in all these Instances, and in all these Respects ; to what a Degree they would lessen all these Sickneses, Pains, Wants and Discontents that now rage in such Multitudes in this unhappy World ; that then there would be no need for Penal Laws, Halters and Gibbets, nor any Sufferings by, nor any Fear of those Crimes which those Laws were made to prevent, the Evils of which, and the Trouble of guarding against them, give us more Vexation and Misery than all the Cares and Misfortunes of the World besides. Let them think of this at the Time when we have such a feeling Experience of the Truths here laid down.

Let them consider that all these most important Duties, are pressed upon us by the most forcible and engaging Motives, that reasonable, and therefore free and accountable Creatures can be influenced by : That they are laid upon us by the Command of that God from whose Eyes nothing can be hid, to whose Power no other Being can make any Resistance, and upon whose good Pleasure the Whole of our Happiness or Misery must entirely Depend, who has made Man not just to be born into this World, and immediately to die out of it again, but to live for ever in the inconceivable Bliss or Wretchedness of another World, who has promised his highest Favour to our Obedience and Virtue, and threatned his severest Wrath to our Disobedience and Vice, and has constituted Matters in such a Way, both by our own Nature and his all perfect Will, that Happiness must be the Effect of our good Behaviour, and Misery the Consequence of that which is Bad ; who directs every thing

in this World by his allwise and gracious Providence, even to the falling of a Hair from off our Head ; who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, who marks, and will call us to an Account, for every one of our Actions, and who will in one solemn and visible Judgment publish to the World, and punish the Wicked for every Crime which they have committed, and proclaim and reward the Virtuous for every Good they have done, or Loss, or Trouble they have suffered in the Discharge of their Duty, and for every Evil they have patiently born in this Life.

Let them also consider what an immeasurable Benefit it must produce to us, to have those things delivered in the certain and infinitely amiable Manner, in which Christianity has set them forth to us, who from our Reason are capacitated to know our God and our Obligations to him, and by this and the strongest Propensity of our Nature are made, to reverence, love and fear him ; to expect another and an endless Life after this ; and to hope and rejoice in his Favour, and to expect and tremble at the Vengeance which he will inflict upon the Wicked, in it ; what an immeasurable Benefit it must be to have us treated in all these Matters, with such an inconceivably affectionate and condescending Deference to all our Wants, Weaknesses and Imperfections, as is the best fitted that is possible to secure our eternal Salvation in the next Life, and to fill us with all those Comforts which such an assured Hope must necessarily produce in this.

To have an Attonement of infinite Value made for the Sins of us Sinners, by the Incarnation and Death of the only begotten and eternal Son of the Father, which is more than sufficient to satisfy for the Transgressions of the whole World, and certain to procure our Pardon upon our Repentance and Reformation ; to have a Mediator of infinite Power, Purity and Merit, to intercede for us to our God, and present our imperfect Petitions to him, who is too just and holy to suffer the Approach of our wretched Impurity, and to make us fit for his Mercy and Acceptance by washing us clean in his own all-purifying Blood ; to have our corrupted and weak Nature renewed and strengthened by the Inspiration of his own blessed and eternal Spirit, whose holy Influences are ever present to preserve us from Evil, and guide us to that which is Good ; to be enabled by these Means, boldly to put up our Petitions to the Throne of Grace, for every Thing we would obtain or avoid, with a certainty of
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being heard in them all, so far as they are good for us; to have such an imperfect Service and Obedience as we can give accepted of for our Salvation, to have our Sins forgiven upon our Repentance, and our Return to our Duty, taken at our Hands, instead of the constant Performance of it; and finally, to have him to judge us, and to decide our Fate for ever, who, from being equal with God, emptied himself, and became equal to Man in all the Imperfections of his Nature, Sin only excepted, who was tempted as we are, and experimentally knows all our Weaknesses, and who by all these Means has given such inconceivable Instances of his Love to Man, and most earnest Desire of his Salvation. These are things so amazingly fitted to our present Condition, as must for ever remove from us all gloomy Apprehensions of our being deserted by our God, or of being made miserable by his Judgment, except we do by our own Hands draw down his unwilling Vengeance upon our ungrateful and profligate Heads. Let them consider that we have indeed by these Means, such an undoubted Certainty of our Salvation for ever, if we will live up to the easy Terms of the Gospel, as may fill our Lives with the most exalted Hope and Joy; and finally, when the last Scene of these transitory Things approaches, and we come to sink under that Mortality which must unavoidably remove us hence; as it has all the former Generations of men, as may cause us to behold our approaching Death, without any of that Dread which meer unassisted Nature must have at the Thought of sinking into nothing, or of that infinitely worse Horror which must arise in the Mind at the Prospect, or even doubt, of falling into never-ending and irretrievable Misery; this Hope which may on the contrary bear us up even in the Agonies of Death, with this infinitely rapturous Assurance, that we are only hastening through a dark and short Passage, into the Arms of our most merciful and loving God and Saviour, there for ever free from all Danger, Fear or Pain, to be blessed in his Presence with Life, Light, Glory and Happiness inconceivable and everlasting.

Let it be considered that the Clergy are to teach all those Things to their People, to see that they be instructed in them from their very Infancy, to do all that they can to gain them an entire Influence over the Whole of their Lives and all their Actions, and this not only in their private Exhortations, but much more by their publick Offices in the Church, which besides the mighty Force that they must have to direct them

to Virtue, are also most powerful to bring down the divine Blessing upon them in all their Undertakings: that the Clergy are obliged to do this, not only by the Laws of the Land, which have given them their Maintenance for this Purpose, but more especially by the most powerful Commands of their God, who hath put them into this Ministry with this Intention; a Ministry which, by having voluntarily taken upon themselves, they are obliged faithfully to discharge, by all the Ties of Conscience, to God and Man. Let them consider, that there is hereby a little Policy established in every District or Parish, whereby the Inhabitants of it have generally a Man of Sense, Learning and Virtue, to watch over them for their Good; who besides all publick Offices and weekly calling them together, for their Instruction in Religion and Virtue and the publick Worship of their God, which must in many Instances be of the greatest Benefit to the Civil Society, is to visit them in their Sickness, to comfort them by his Advice in any Distresses, and to help them in their Prayers; and by these Means to fit them for Heaven and Happiness, if they should die; and if they should recover, by making use of those tender Moments which their Sickness must produce, to reclaim them to Virtue, and make them worthy to live, by becoming a Blessing to themselves and the World. How far both they and the Community they belong to, must be benefitted by such Services, is easily to be perceived, and surely he who hath neither Religion or Goodness himself, would be glad to see them universally embraced by others, for certain self-interested Reasons not necessary to be mentioned.

Let them consider that this Man is obliged by his Office to be more beneficent than others; that by the Discharge of it, he must have a sufficient Opportunity of knowing who are in reality the greatest Objects of Compassion; that by what he himself can give, or by the Assistance which he can procure from others, he may frequently cure them of their Sickness, and relieve them in their Wants; that in every Parish there is hereby a little Oeconomy established, wherewith a considerable Number of the most deserving Poor are maintained, who without this would be left quite destitute, and that in such a Manner, as to encourage in the mean while both Industry and Religion in them, instead of that Idleness and Vice which such necessitous Circumstances are apt to beget. Let my Gentlemen consider of all these Things,

Things, and then reflect what they are doing, who endeavour to destroy such an Institution as this is in every Particular, that they may introduce they know not what, to be sure no Kind of Religion in its Place, and then think what a return they deserve from the World for such an Attempt.

When Archbishop *Tillotson* had given an Account of the Nature of God, he concludes, that to banish such a Being from the World, would be as melancholy a Thought as to extinguish the Sun; which every Body knows to be the great material Parent of Light, Sustenance, Life, Being, and all Happiness on this Earth. A noble Expression this! and it is just as it is strong and beautiful; but it is so, because he has not given us such a Representation as *Bolingbrooke*, *Shaftesbury*, *Tindal*, *Hume*, &c. or even what human Reason itself can draw, of the divine Nature; but such as Christianity has set him forth to us, and I have endeavoured to describe him in some of his Ordinances. And this Truth is in Effect acknowledged by Lord *Bolingbrooke* himself, who confesses, that he would be as bad a Politician who should deny the Truth of the more material Part of these Things; namely, of the Attention given by God to Virtue and Vice, and the endless and inconceivable Retribution that he will reward them with in another Life, as he would be a bad Philosopher who should believe them. Thoughtless or detestable Reasoner! Who has himself applied all his great Abilities, to do this very Thing which he acknowledges to be so prejudicial to Mankind; who has by this Means degraded us into an Equality with, nay, into an Inferiority to the Beasts themselves; for Reason without Religion is only a dangerous Weapon put into Mens Hands, to do Mischief with, both to ourselves and others; and who is so weak as not to see, that this must, upon his own Principles, be a Proof of this very Thing, which he thus with equal Stupidity and Wickedness denies. For either this will disprove the Being of a God, which he all along declares for, or it will demonstrate that a Belief which is so generally and greatly beneficial to his Creatures, must be true. For to make them in such a Manner, as that they shall universally be benefitted by that which is false, is a Supposition utterly repugnant to his Goodness or Truth, and inconsistent with that Perfection, which the divine Nature must most necessarily possess. Besides, is not Politicks, truly so called, an essential Branch of true Philosophy? If it is, what means a Distinction, which
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makes that right in necessary Politicks, which is wrong in true Philosophy?

Indeed the very many and great Benefits which must arise to the World from such a Religion, and the prodigious Mischiefs which must be occasioned by the destroying of it, altho' there were no just Providence to punish such a detestable Apostacy, and by these Means the setting Men loose from all Restraints, to be governed only by their brutish Appetites and Passions, are so very glaring and manifest, that it would be incredible, if we did not know it to be Fact, that Men of high Fortune and Rank, and pretendedly of a superior Understanding and Knowledge, should attempt to abolish this Religion, and more especially should do this with all imaginable Eagerness, as a Work highly honourable to the Doer, and beneficial to the rest of Mankind.

But to render this Attempt still more odious, let these Gentlemen consider what Motive it is that urges them to make it. For if it should proceed from an inconsiderate Vanity of getting into the Mode, or of making themselves pass for extraordinary Wits; and much more; if it should arise from Malice to the Clergy, or from a Desire to give up all Hopes of an Hereafter, that they may quietly indulge in their most shameful Vices here, or from their having already gone to such a length in them, as that they cannot think of retreating, nor reflect without Horror on meeting with any Retribution for their Actions; or if it be with an Intent to destroy the Protestant Religion, in order to introduce another Kind of Christianity, which it is not as yet safe for them to name; if the Attempt should proceed from any of those Motives, and I am much mistaken if, upon searching their Hearts, they can find any better for it, their Behaviour is then so very base and detestable, as to deserve not the Imitation or Esteem, but the Contempt and Abhorrence of all Mankind.

And now possibly it may be safe for me to hint, that it would be a good Expedient instead of distressing the Clergy, to provide Glebes and Glebe Houses for those of them who have none, and are too poor to bear the Expence of Building for themselves. To Force those of the smallest Incomes, and which are also so generally ill paid, to expend a whole Year's Revenue upon this Work, would put those poor People to such Difficulties, that I cannot but think that Bill was justly rejected, which would have laid them under so cruel a Hardship; but to enable them by some other
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Means to reside in their Parishes, although it might make your Tenants pay something more for their Tythes; would be of so great Advantage to the Protestant Religion, that it must greatly over-balance in the Breast of any Man who has the least Regard for it, the little Inconveniency which might arise from the other Circumstance.

But to conclude, if it shall seem to any of my Readers, that I have sometimes wandered from my Purpose, I have this to say in my own Defence, that the Increase of Infidelity and Irreligion, is a sure way to the Increase of Popery also; that he is, in my Eyes, no more to be reckoned a Protestant who renounces the Faith of Christ, than he who believes the Pope to be the infallible Head of the Church; that to abandon the outward Profession of Christianity, must soon draw after it an Insensibility of, and an Indifference to, all Religion; and at the long run must Occasion, either a Retreat into Popery, or a Progress into Unbelief; that however, we are at this Time in more immediate Danger of losing our Protestant Faith by falling into Infidelity, than by any direct Attempts which can be made against us by the Church of *Rome*; and that as the People of that Persuasion have no Idea of a Church, where no visible Profession is made of some Religion, and indeed of that which is Christian, it must, in the highest Degree, be prejudicial to the Cause of the Reformation, to have our publick Worship generally deserted; and much more to have it, upon all Occasions, treated with Indignity and Contempt.

F I N I S.

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